

Umpire Advisory Team Meeting Summary November 4, 2024

On November 4, 2024, the Umpire Advisory Team (UAT) held its last meeting for the 2024 softball year. UAT members in attendance were Bryan Richter, President, Joe Holonich, Secretary, Scott Snyder, Jim Morton, Bill Chatterton, and Joann Brickwedde.

- Review of Fall Season

Only one topic was raised for the fall season. An umpire took a phone on the field and was scrolling. The UAT recommends that Softball Umpires of Maryland (SUM) management issue a reminder that umpires should only take their phones on the field as a timing device. This reminder could be made at the annual kickoff meeting.

- Replacement for Rick Morris

The UAT discussed three possible candidates to replace Rick Morris. Carl Knight will replace Rick Morris on the UAT. At a future meeting the UAT will discuss potential revisions to the process of replacing members who resign.

- Use of Arbiter Pay

The UAT was asked by SUM to discuss the possibility of using Arbiter Pay. The UAT agreed that if Arbiter Pay accelerated paying umpires, it was worth doing. However, if using Arbiter Pay still resulted in the current time for getting umpires paid, the UAT believed it was a SUM decision if it made the paying process more efficient.

- Informing Site Directors of Ejections

There was a coach ejection in the last game of the previous tournament. The coach came to the next tournament and the Site Director (SD) was unaware that the coach was not allowed in the next game. United States Specialty Sports Association, East Coast Events (USSSA ECE) reported that it was an oversight. USSSA ECE has stated how it supports the umpires in bringing civility back to the softball field. If USSSA ECE does inform the SD that an ejected coach must sit out the next game, then the protocol isn't working.

The UAT recommends that SUM should work with USSSA ECE to ensure that there is a process in place that identifies ejected individuals and informs the SD and Umpire in Chief at a complex where the team is playing its next game.

- Status of Mentoring

At its June meeting, the UAT recommended SUM develop a mentoring program. A proposal was developed and presented for consideration to the SUM training team in an August meeting. SUM management did not think the mentoring program could be implemented.

The concern was experienced umpires working with recruits once tournaments became larger and older, more competitive teams were playing. This would take experienced umpires from games where they were needed.

The UAT decided to table this topic. It was agreed that the UAT would engage the new SUM assigner once he had gained some experience in assigning games.

- **UAT Presentation at Annual Meeting**

For the past two years the UAT has made a presentation at the annual SUM kickoff meeting on its efforts during the year. The question to the UAT was did it want to do it in 2025. Potential topics for a presentation could be issues discussed at UAT meetings during the year. These included:

1. Professionalism of Umpires
2. Retrieval of Game Balls
3. Mentoring and Mentoring Program
4. Rain Delay Pay
5. Coach Behavior
6. Porta Potty at Fairlands Field 3
7. Quality of Fields
8. Repeats of Cheers
9. Northern VA Unlimited Defensive Substitutions
10. Umpires Working in Northern Virginia and reducing available umpires in Maryland

An action was taken for UAT members to email topics to the entire team for the presentation. A decision on whether to do one would be made at the next UAT meeting that will be held before the annual SUM kickoff meeting.

- **Other Topics**

No other topics were raised.

- **Next meeting**

The next UAT meeting will be held on Monday, February 3, 2025.

- **Action Items**

The action items from the meeting are:

1. SUM should reinforce the proper use of cell phones at the annual meeting in 2025.
2. The UAT will discuss a process for replacing members who resign.
3. SUM should work with USSSA ECE to ensure that there is a process in place that identifies ejected individuals and informs the SD and Umpire in Chief at a complex
4. UAT members to email potential topics for a possible presentation at the annual SUM kickoff meeting.

- **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned.

Attachment 2 2024 Action Items

Action Item	Owner	Status
Reinforce the proper use of cell phones at the annual meeting in 2025	John Dye	
UAT will develop a process for replacing members who resign.	Ritcher	
SUM should work with USSSA ECE to ensure that there is a process in place that identifies ejected individuals and informs the SD and Umpire in Chief at a complex	John Dye	
UAT members will email all members topics for a possible presentation at the annual SUM kickoff meeting.	Holonich	
SUM should look to USSSA ECE to address the inappropriate walk-up music and sounds.	John Dye	
SUM should ask USSSA ECE to get the porta potty at Fairland, Field 3 back.	John Dye	
SUM should make sure USSSA ECE reinforces with Site Directors and park staff the need to make sure lining the field is done properly, for example batter's boxes.	John Dye	
SUM should discuss the use of derogatory sounds and music with USSSA ECE, and recommend USSSA ECE remind teams that derogatory sounds and music should not be played.	John Dye	
Authoritative guidance to umpires on the use of proper mechanics should be issued by SUM.	John Dye	Closed: John Dye provided guidance in a SUMmary.
Joe Holonich will work with the training development team to investigate the use of mentors.	Joe Holonich	Closed: SUM did not believe a mentoring program could be effectively implemented.

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Action Item	Owner	Status
SUM should work with USSSA ECE to see if NoVa teams can be informed before tournaments weekends that unlimited substitutions are not permitted.	John Dye	
SUM should remind UICs to provide water and power bars to umpires at fields.	John Dye	